



Department for Workforce Investment  
Education Cabinet

# Kentucky Office for the Blind 2005 Annual Report



Stephen M. Johnson, Executive Director

209 St. Clair Street, P.O. Box 757  
Frankfort, KY 40602-0757  
800-321-6668  
<http://blind.ky.gov>

## ***Our Mission . . .***

***Our mission is to provide opportunities for employment and independence to individuals with visual disabilities.***

*Consistent with the purpose and principles of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Office for the Blind has established the following program principles:*

1. We value our consumers and respect their individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and right to privacy;
2. We presume that our consumers, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of engaging in competitive employment;
3. We believe that to meet quality employment outcomes, specialized services of the highest quality such as rehabilitation teaching, assistive technology, and orientation and mobility are essential for individuals who are blind;
4. We believe our consumers must be active participants in their own rehabilitation programs, including making meaningful and informed choices about the selection of their vocational goals, objectives, and services they receive;
5. We are committed to our responsibility to provide consumers with program information in an accessible format, including Braille, audio recording, and large print;
6. We value our staff of qualified rehabilitation professionals and believe they can facilitate the accomplishment of consumers' employment goals and objectives.

These principles were developed in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council and Office for the Blind staff with input from consumers and other interested parties.



It is with great pleasure that I present the Kentucky Office for the Blind's 2005 Annual Report. OFB had a record breaking year, serving 2,895 blind or significantly visually impaired consumers. The staff is committed to restoring hope and providing opportunities to consumers by giving them the tools they need to become independent in their homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.

The latest census statistics indicate Kentucky has a blind or visually impaired population of 47,021. These individuals deserve the finest education, training, and equipment OFB can offer to meet their vocational goals. I believe specialized services are the key to dignity, productivity, and independence for Kentuckians who are blind or visually impaired.

This annual report shows that the OFB staff met and exceeded the challenges of 2005. Along with our agency's accomplishment data, you will find consumer success stories highlighted throughout this report.

I extend thanks and appreciation to the Office for the Blind's State Rehabilitation Council, the Department for Workforce Investment, and the Education Cabinet for their commitment to the mission of this agency. I applaud the outstanding efforts of the OFB statewide staff who are dedicated to helping consumers build a better future and improve their quality of life.

Sincerely,  
Stephen M. Johnson  
Executive Director

## ***2,895 blind or visually impaired Kentuckians were served in 2005***

**416** were successfully employed

**1,239** worked toward a vocational goal

**1,179** were served by the Independent Living Program

**61** vendors were served by Kentucky Business Enterprises

Charles W. McDowell Center provided comprehensive services to 160 consumers

<i>Previous Years</i>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>
<b>Blind Kentuckians Served</b>	<b>2895</b>	<b>2806</b>	<b>2780</b>	<b>2416</b>
<b>Successfully Employed</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Worked Toward a Vocational Goal</b>	<b>1239</b>	<b>1211</b>	<b>1365</b>	<b>1071</b>
<b>Served by Independent Living Program</b>	<b>1179</b>	<b>1121</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>976</b>
<b>Served by Kentucky Business Enterprises</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>60</b>

## ***2005 OFFICE FOR THE BLIND ACCOMPLISHMENTS***

- **Educational Assistance to 249 blind or visually impaired students**
  - OFB invested \$610,000 in student educational opportunities at universities, colleges, and technical colleges in 2005.
- **Awarded Education at Work scholarships to six (6) consumers**
- **Ft. Knox Supply Center job opportunities with six (6) consumers placed in full-time positions**
- **Job opportunities for consumers at General Butler and Kincaid Lake State Parks**
- **Citi-Card job opportunities with five (5) consumers placed into customer service positions**
- **Accessible newspaper bill passed (House Bill 262)**
  - Bill provides eleven (11) daily newspapers in Kentucky for the blind or visually impaired through audible telephone services called Newslane
- **Interstate vending contract awarded to Pepsi**
  - Benefits for OFB**
    - 55% commissions for Business Enterprises Division
    - \$100,000 over five (5) years for student scholarships
    - Special promotion proceeds to OFB (\$10,000 to \$15,000)
- **Bioptic Driving Program funded through June 2006 by Workforce Investment Act Funds**
- **OFB staff masters program approved with eight (8) graduates receiving M.A. in Rehabilitation Counseling**
- **OFB provided training for staff to meet continuing education and certification needs**

## **Who Are We?**

In existence for 29 years, the **Kentucky Office for the Blind** is within the Department for Workforce Investment, Education Cabinet. In addition to serving visually impaired individuals, we also partner with business and industry by helping employers who wish to hire qualified workers or retain a valued employee that has sustained a vision loss.

The programs are funded through a mix of federal and state resources. Approximately 12% of the annual budget comes from state General Fund dollars while the remaining 88% comes from federal grants and income generated by the programs themselves.

## **What Do We Do?**

- **Vocational Rehabilitation Program**  
Assists individuals who are blind or visually impaired achieve their vocational goals
- **Independent Living Services**  
Helps people who lose their vision learn to perform daily living activities
- **Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center**  
A state-of-the-art facility offering a variety of comprehensive training opportunities
- **Business Enterprises**  
Trains and places individuals for self-employment in vending and food service facilities
- **Bioptic Driving Program**  
Provides specialized training to qualified individuals to obtain a drivers license
- **Deaf Blind Program**  
Consumers with dual disabilities are offered the opportunity to have counselors from the Office for Vocational Rehabilitation and our agency provide services to meet their special needs
- **Accessible Textbook Service**  
Provides audio versions of books for students and others with a vision loss
- **KY Assistive Technology Service Network (KATS)**  
Assists individuals of any age and/or disability in finding and using appropriate technology
- **State Rehabilitation Council**  
Analyzes OFB program effectiveness, makes recommendations, and measures consumer satisfaction
- **Web Site at <http://blind.ky.gov>**  
Provides detailed information about our services for job seekers and employers

## ***Vocational Rehabilitation Program***

Our vocational rehabilitation program provides assistance to eligible individuals with significant visual impairments by helping them achieve their vocational goals and enter or retain employment. Services may include:

- Diagnostics and evaluations
- Counseling and guidance
- Medical treatments, surgery & therapy
- Rehabilitation technology and engineering
- Occupational licenses, tools and equipment
- Supported Employment
- On-the-job training
- Job placement assistance
- Post-employment support
- Interpreter services provided for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing while involved in their rehabilitation program
- Vocational training
- Orientation and Mobility
- Work Experience
- Services to employers to retain employees

### **Here's what we accomplished in 2005:**

- We were able to serve blind and significantly visually impaired consumers
  - **416** were successfully employed
  - **1,239** worked toward their future vocational goal
  - **289** received Orientation and Mobility training
  - **346** received Assistive Technology services
  - **20** received Deaf Blind services

## Vocational Rehabilitation Program (cont.)

Jason Marston likes to work with his hands. Marston, who has diabetes, has low vision and has held a variety of factory jobs over the past several years. When he learned from his counselor that General Butler State Resort Park in Carrollton had an interim position for a park groundskeeper, he was eager to have the chance to work outside.

“I just like to get out and work,” he said recently.

Park Manager Stephen Jones said Marston already has proven to be a valuable employee. “He is a hard worker,” Jones said.

Marston is the first employee to be hired under a partnership between the Commerce Cabinet, Department of Parks and the state Office for the Blind, an agency in the Department for Workforce Investment.

“Our goal is to hire the best people available in our park system. If a person with a visual impairment is the best choice, then we will work with the Office for the Blind to help him or her succeed,” said Commerce Cabinet Secretary, George Ward. “We consider this partnership a logical step for an administration that is committed to providing job opportunities for persons with disabilities.”



Jason Marston uses a cup cutter on the golf course at General Butler State Resort Park.



Melanie works as a retail sales associate.

Melanie Johnson is a highly motivated and hard working individual. She has physical limitations and uses a scooter for mobility. She also requires the assistance of a guide dog for other activities.

When Melanie learned about a new Office Eagle Supply store opening on the Fort Knox base, she said to her counselor, “Get me an interview and I know I can sell myself.” She was interviewed and hired as a retail associate. Melanie possessed the knowledge and ability to do the job but due to her visual limitations she required some assistive technology.

Assistive Technology Specialist, Jenny Tyree, met with Melanie on the job site to assess specific job duties and determine job accommodations. As a result of this relationship, Melanie has been successfully employed full time at the Office Eagle Supply store since August 2005.

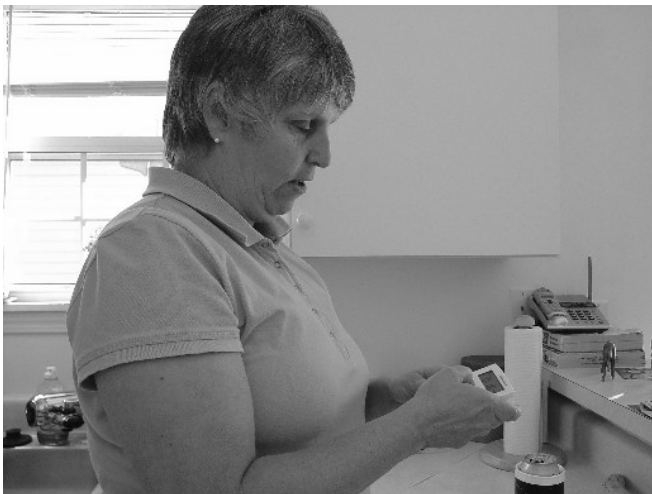


## Independent Living Services

The Kentucky Office for the Blind's Independent Living Services assists people who are blind or visually impaired to help them perform the activities associated with daily living. This involves training in the person's home to learn new ways of performing tasks. It also involves providing adaptive equipment such as talking clocks and magnifiers that can help people perform the activities of daily living in a more independent manner. After these consumers develop independence, they often desire employment opportunities and enter the vocational rehabilitation program. Training and provision of adaptive equipment are based on individual needs.

### Here's what we accomplished in 2005:

- **1,179** individuals were served with Independent Living Services
- **834** individuals received comprehensive training and services leading to independence
- **345** previously served individuals received short term services allowing continued independence



Susan has learned to live independently at home.

learned to use many adaptive methods enabling her to manage her daily living tasks. She quickly learned to use various adaptive devices provided for her. Susan now lives independently caring for herself and her home.

Susan Nance was born with no residual vision in her right eye. She did well using the vision in her left eye, and in 1975 earned a degree in Physical Therapy. In 1987 she was accepted into Texas A & M to pursue a degree in Equine Physiology. Soon thereafter she noticed her vision being distorted. An examination revealed a torn retina in her left eye, and she lost all central vision a few years later.

In 2004 she moved to Henderson, KY and wanted to live as independently as possible. To accomplish this goal, her counselor provided individualized training sessions in her home. Susan



## Charles W. McDowell Rehabilitation Center

This modern residential facility located in Louisville, Kentucky, offers individualized training in state-of-the-art speech and Braille communication devices, as well as new computer technologies that can assist in employment opportunities and daily living. Additional classes are available in alternative housekeeping, cooking, and community travel skills. Specialists at the McDowell Center help Kentuckians with significant visual impairments learn to function independently and choose rewarding careers.

### Here's what we accomplished in 2005:

- **160** individuals from across Kentucky received comprehensive services
- **"See World"**, a specialized store located at the Center with state-of-the-art low vision aids for blind and visually impaired consumers, served 2360 individuals (For more information visit <http://seeworld.ky.gov>)
- **University of Kentucky Distance Learning Center** added to McDowell Center
- **New Lion's Club** formed and now meets at the McDowell Center



Mary Adrian learns how to travel independently at the McDowell Center.

Mary Adrian has been totally blind since birth. She graduated from the Kentucky School for the Blind in 1983.

After moving to Lexington in 2004, Mary heard about the services available from the Office for the Blind. She decided to work with OFB to improve her independence in preparation for joining the workforce. She began participating in classes and services at the McDowell Rehabilitation Center in January, 2005.

Mary has taken several classes including Computer Keyboarding, Orientation and Mobility, Work Experience Training, Braille, and Adult Education. In addition, she performed a work experience at the McDowell Center's switchboard and volunteers to operate the switchboard when needed.

Mary describes her experience at the McDowell Center as "great" and she appreciates the staff and their professionalism.

After completing services, she plans to seek employment in the clerical services field and is working closely with her counselor to reach her goal.

## ***Bioptic Driving Program***

The Kentucky Bioptic Driving Law, (KRS 186.576 to 186.579) was enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky on January 1, 2001. Kentucky's Bioptic Driving Program helps qualifying Kentuckians regain independence through special training that enables them to obtain a driver's license. Individuals participate in a visual examination and evaluation to determine the functional use of their existing vision. Evaluation and testing are provided through an optometrist or ophthalmologist and a Bioptic Driving Specialist. With a bioptic device, the individual must meet the visual acuity and visual field standards of the law. After qualifying for a learner's permit, completing extensive behind the wheel training, and successful testing by the Kentucky State Police, individuals will receive a driver's license.

Since the program began, the Drivers Licensing Division of the Transportation Cabinet has granted licenses in Kentucky to 66 Bioptic drivers. As a result, individuals have been able to obtain first-time employment or upgrade to better jobs. Some, who were in jeopardy of losing their jobs, were able to maintain their employment because they obtained a driver's license.

### **Here's what we accomplished in 2005:**

- **41** drivers received "behind the wheel" training
- **14** bioptic driver's licenses were issued
  - **7** persons were able to maintain their job because of a driver's license
  - **3** persons were able to upgrade to better jobs
  - **3** university students can now drive to classes
  - **1** person is currently seeking an employment opportunity



The Kentucky Office for the Blind has been offering training for Bioptic Drivers for three years. Using specialized prescriptive bioptics, as shown in this photo, some individuals who never had any hope of obtaining a license now drive and achieve goals they once thought impossible.

## ***Accessible Textbook Service***

The Kentucky Office for the Blind administers a program in two areas of our state that research and procure textbooks in alternative formats. Formats include 2-track cassette recordings, DAISY recordings, and electronic text files on CD obtained from publishers. Community volunteers are also solicited to reproduce textbooks and other materials unavailable in existing useable formats.

The Accessible Textbook Service maintains the state library of alternative materials and provides services to individuals including elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools. The **Lexington Office** serves residents and students who are EAST of Frankfort, while the **Paducah Office** serves those WEST of Frankfort.

An online database catalog of books recorded onto cassette tape or CD can be accessed at <http://blind.ky.gov/PublicVRULibrarySearch.asp>.

### **Here's what we accomplished in 2005:**

- **152** individuals were served
- **112** digital books were processed
- **Professional Materials** provided in alternative format to employed individuals

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### **Two locations in Kentucky**

Linda Townzen, Coordinator  
Paducah Accessible Textbook Service  
220 N 8th Street, Suite E  
Paducah, Kentucky 42001  
Phone: 270-575-7056  
or toll free 888-896-0438

Jo Stewart, Coordinator  
Lexington Accessible Textbook Service  
Room 2, Alumni Gym Building  
University of Kentucky  
Lexington, Kentucky 40506-0029  
Phone: 859-257-6602  
or toll free 800-306-3472

## ***Kentucky Business Enterprises***

Kentucky Business Enterprises (KBE) is one of the nation's leading vending and food services programs operated by people who are blind. The program trains and places individuals as self-employed operators of snack bars, cafeterias, and automated vending facilities in public and private buildings across Kentucky. The KBE operating budget is derived through commissions received from the interstate contracted vending sites.

### **Here's what we accomplished in 2005:**

- **61** total vendors were served by Kentucky Business Enterprises
- **3** new vendors began working
- **New statewide contract** for soft drinks finalized with Pepsi
- **4** new satellite sites added



Ernie Bourne, a beloved figure in the KBE vending program, was honored for his 53 years of service on Saturday, July 30, 2005 in Louisville. At 79 years of age, Ernie continues to exhibit the hard work, professionalism and devotion to the blind vending program that has built Kentucky's program into one of the nation's finest. Ernie is the vending facility manager at the City Hall building in Louisville.

### **State Committee of Blind Vendors 2005/2006**

Charles Allen - Chair	Carole Morris
Mac Carnes - Vice Chair	Randy Hester
Brice Howard	Dennis Franklin
Mike Hartsock	Jerry Grimes
George Stokes	Richard Barnhart
Tim Davis	

## ***KY Assistive Technology Services Network (KATS)***

KATS Network is the Kentucky Assistive Technology project operating within its lead agency, the Office for the Blind. Funded through the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, the KATS Network consists of a statewide network of organizations and individuals connecting to enhance the availability of assistive technology. The mission of this collaborative system is to make assistive technology information, devices and services easily obtainable for people of any age and/or disability. In addition to the Coordinating Center located in the McDowell Center in Louisville, there are four AT regional resources centers and two satellite centers. Visit KATS online at <http://www.katsnet.org> or call 800-327-5287.

### **Here's what we accomplished in 2005:**

- **7,182** Consumers and Professionals served
- **5,372** Individual trainings, consultations, and demonstrations
- **2,437** Group training participants from 141 workshops
- **1,789** Assistive technology equipment, devices, or materials loaned
- **409** Recycled computers provided to consumers



The Western Kentucky Technology Center (WKATC), a participating member of the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services (KATS) network, held its grand opening on Friday, August 12, 2005 on Wendell Foster's Campus for Developmental Disabilities in Owensboro. WKATC will provide assistive technology assessments, evaluations, and services for 29 counties in western Kentucky. As a participating member of the KATS network, services include assistive technology evaluations, product demonstrations, learning lab, technical assistance, training, and a short-term device lending library.

In the photo at left, seated is Chase Forrester, Director of the Kentucky Assistive Technology Services network.

## State Rehabilitation Council

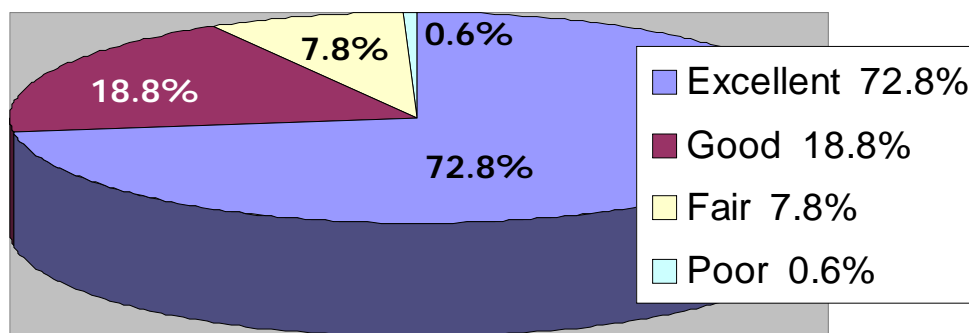
The State Rehabilitation Council works in partnership with the Office for the Blind by reviewing program effectiveness, making recommendations, and conducting a yearly consumer satisfaction survey.

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, Public Law 105-220, mandate the establishment of the State Rehabilitation Council. The intent of Congress in requiring a consumer-controlled Council is reflected by the requirement that a Council must be in place for the state to receive funds under Title 1 for vocational rehabilitation. Statutory language mandates the establishment, composition and appointment, authority, duties, and activities of the Council.

Governor Fletcher appoints members of the Council for three-year terms after soliciting recommendations from organizations representing individuals with visual impairments. Council membership also includes employers representing business and industry.

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### 2005 Overall Consumer Satisfaction



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### The 2005-2006 State Rehabilitation Council Members are:

Charlie Allen	Pam Glisson	Juda Potter
Shannon Caldwell	Gerry Gordon-Brown	Gerry Rader
Frank Cameron	Jennifer Holladay	Carla Rushival
Cecil Cox	Michael Johnson	Freda Shipman
Bill Deatherage	Pearline Lipscomb	Opal Spencer
Dr. Richard Eiferman	Jim Mayberry	Scott Trimble
Pauletta Feldman	Ron Milliman	Eugene Willis



## Where are We Located?

The Kentucky Office for the Blind central office is located in Frankfort. We also maintain ten field offices throughout Kentucky. Each field office is staffed with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and other support persons to serve their local geographic area. Every office has a toll free phone number allowing easy and free access to all Kentuckians.

**Kentucky Office for the Blind, Central Office**  
**209 St. Clair Street, P.O. Box 757**  
**Frankfort, KY 40601**  
**Voice: 502-564-4754 or 800-321-6668**  
**FAX: 502-564-2951 TDD: 502-564-2929**

### Field Offices

#### Ashland

411 19th Street  
 Ashland, KY 41101  
 606-920-2000  
 800-334-6881  
 606-920-2001 FAX

#### Florence

8020 Veterans Memorial Dr.  
 Suite 100  
 Florence, KY 41042  
 859-371-3380  
 800-334-6895  
 859-371-0379 FAX

#### Owensboro

3000 Alvey Park Dr. West  
 Owensboro, KY 42303  
 270-687-7306  
 800-334-6929  
 270-687-7526 FAX

#### Somerset

650 North Main Street  
 Gateway Center, Suite 240  
 Somerset, KY 42501  
 606-677-4042  
 800-895-3863  
 606-677-4043 FAX

#### Bowling Green

400 East Main Street  
 Suite 302  
 Bowling Green, KY 42101  
 270-746-7479  
 800-222-1215  
 270-746-7481 FAX

#### Lexington

153 Patchen Drive  
 Suite 17  
 Lexington, KY 40517  
 859-246-2111  
 800-291-8424  
 859-246-2112 FAX

#### Paducah

220 North 8th Street  
 Suite E  
 Paducah, KY 42001  
 270-575-7315  
 800-334-6945  
 270-575-7987 FAX

#### Elizabethtown

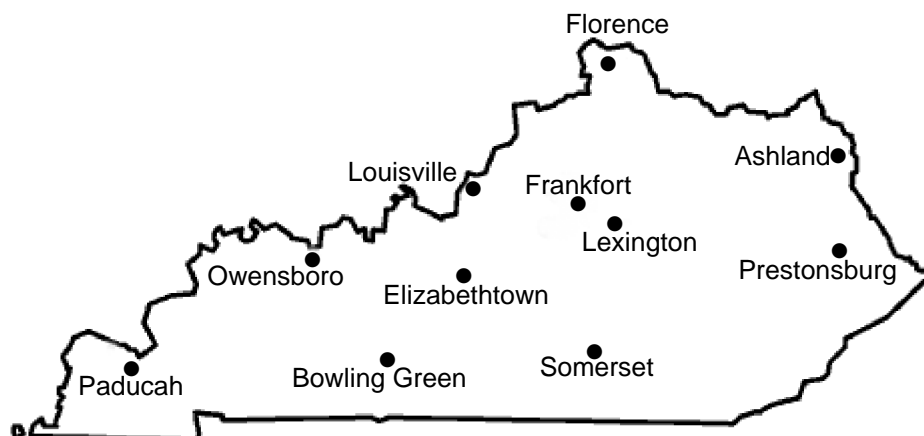
409 North Miles Street  
 Elizabethtown, KY 42701  
 270-766-5126  
 800-760-6891  
 270-766-5125 FAX

#### Louisville

8412 Westport Road  
 Louisville, KY 40242  
 502-429-4460  
 800-346-2115  
 502-429-7101 FAX

#### Prestonsburg

16 Bingham Street  
 Prestonsburg, KY 41653  
 606-889-1685  
 800-334-6940  
 606-889-1686 FAX





The Kentucky Office for the Blind does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, or disability in employment or the provision of services and provides upon request reasonable accommodation.